

## AMORIS LAETITIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION

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### Abstract

This article is an invitation for an attentive study of the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* from an educative point of view. After a brief introduction, the author evidences how the theme of education is placed in the document. It highlights the family as the Sacred Space of learning, how family becomes the school of love, the role of the family in the integral education of its members, especially the young generation. It also focuses on the transmission of faith in the families and the duty of parents to accompany in the growth process of children. The article brings into light the educative perspective of *Amoris Laetitia* concentrating especially in the chapter dedicated to educating children.

**Keywords:** Educating Children, Education to Love, Integral Education, Family

“The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church.” Pope Francis opens the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*,<sup>1</sup> with these beautiful words. It is a summary of his particular interest in the educating role of families in the Church. On

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<sup>1</sup>Francis, The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (AL), Carmel International Publishing house, Trivandrum 2016, 1. Hereafter, AL.

19 March 2013, in his first homily he recalled the vocation of Human Being as being the 'care taker' of the entire creation as family. He explains the term 'care taker' as one who takes care of the other as in a family. The parents who take care of their children who in turn listen to their parents and become care takers of their own parents and at the end, taking care of the common home.<sup>2</sup>

In the apostolic exhortation, the Pope discovers the biblical and theological, the educational and pastoral "*summa*" concerning the *Joy of Love* in the family, underlining the importance and beauty of the family based on matrimony, inviting us to deepen the value of conjugal love, a true gift of God for human beings. He invites us to bring out the positive and humanizing aspects of human love, which is a reflection of God's love, and is always stronger than the failures of our human plans. We are called to contemplate the exhortation part by part and realize that "families are not a problem; they are first and foremost an opportunity."<sup>3</sup> In the above expression of the Holy Father we get in touch with his unique and deep desire for the great attention to be given to families and the integral formation of children therein.

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Pope Francis, Holy Mass, Imposition of the *Pallium* and Bestowal of The Fisherman's Ring for the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of The Bishop of Rome, 19 March 2013. [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130319\\_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html) on 06.01.2017. "The vocation of being a 'protector,' however, is not just something which involves Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply being human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, as we call, the last, the least and the lost. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives who primarily protecting one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, who in their time, protect parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Called to be protectors of God's gifts." I preferred to use the word 'care taker' instead of protector.

<sup>3</sup>AL, 7. This document evolved after two meetings, the Third Extra Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops (5 to 9 October 2014) and the Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly (4 to 25 October 2015). Both the Assemblies made theological and pastoral study regarding family life. For further reading and reflection, Baldisseri Lorenzo, *Lettera del Segretario Generale alle Conferenze Episcopali per la Trasmissione dei Lineamenta*, 12 dicembre 2014, in [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20141212\\_lettera-lineamenta-xiv-assembly\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141212_lettera-lineamenta-xiv-assembly_it.html) (25 January 2017).

Pope Francis recommends the readers not to have “a rushed reading of the text” (AL, 7), taking heed of this recommendation of the Supreme Pontiff, and being an educator of young people, I would like to make an attentive study of this Apostolic Exhortation from the educative point of view. We shall reflect on the role of families in the integral formation of children.

The document contains nine chapters<sup>4</sup> that illumine the reality of matrimony and of the family from different aspects, trying to harmonize the presentation of the beauty of the Divine plan with a realistic and merciful attention to the many pitfalls and painful situations that occur in real life. Each chapter admirably intertwines fidelity to the truth with compassion and mercy. The document is illumined by the Word of God, without ignoring the present situation, from a Christocentric perspective. Love in the family is always the main theme, with the richness of fruitfulness and the education of children, and with pastoral suggestions that may help on the journey through fragility and imperfection. The document reemphasize parents’ fundamental role in the integral education as central to strengthening of families in the present societal context.<sup>5</sup>

## 1. Family as a Sacred Space for Learning

Parents always have an influence on the good or the not so good within the integral development of their children. The theme of integral education is present right from the first chapter while Pope Francis discusses the fundamental Biblical theme regarding matrimony and family in his apostolic exhortation. “Parents have a serious responsibility for this work of education, as the Biblical sages often remind us (cf. Pro 3:11-12; 6:20-22; 13:1; 22:15; 23: 13-14; 29:17)” (AL, 17). A deeper reflection on the teachings of Pope Francis helps to understand that the integral education is the only key to change the drastic situations of the families. In his address to the association of Catholic School Parents on 5 December 2015, he said, “...the importance of promoting education in the fullness of humanity, because speaking of Catholic education is equivalent to speaking of humans, of humanism. [...] As parents you have the duty [...] to educate your children, and in this regard to give the school positive and constant help with the task. It is your right to demand proper

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<sup>4</sup>Nine chapters are divided to 325 paragraphs with 391 foot notes. This makes us understand the complexity of the document.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. AL, 84. The famous educator of the families Pati Luigi’s reflections helped me to a certain extent to take this approach. Cf. Pati Luigi, ed., *Pedagogia della famiglia: Pedagogia 35*, Brescia: La Scuola, 2014.

education for your children, an education that is integral and open to the most authentic human and Christian values.”<sup>6</sup>

In the second chapter with a healthy realism Pope Francis brings the actual socio-cultural and complex situation of the present day families. On the one hand, the Pope brings into light the educative aspects that are in the shade: like the growth in love and respect, opportune accompaniment (AL, 36), the openness towards grace, marriage as a path of dynamic realization of love, and above all the formation of conscience. In front of these situations the Holy Father asks the universal Church to assume the dutiful responsibility of educating its faithful: “we have been called to form consciences not to replace them” (AL, 37).

On the other hand, he expresses his gratitude for the accompanying presence of parents. “We must be grateful that most people do value family relationships that are permanent and marked by mutual respect.”<sup>7</sup> He also highlights the numerable difficulties the couple often finds in bringing up their children in the present day situations (AL, 41).

The media coverage focused on how the Holy Father would address the issue of Holy Communion for the divorced and remarried Catholics, but forgot significant portions of the document which sought to emphasize the need for integral education and the fundamental role of parents in the education of their children, which play an essential role in renewing the family, a renewal much needed as both the family and the integral education are in crisis.

Above all, this apostolic exhortation brings into light challenges of integral education and its negative consequence for the modern society (AL, 43). For example, the phenomenon of migration<sup>8</sup> and the growing exclusive economic system (AL, 44) forces families to compromise on education and personal maturity with the result of misery and abandonment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Pope Francis, [w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/december/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151205\\_agesc.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/december/documents/papa-francesco_20151205_agesc.html), (13.01.2016)

<sup>7</sup>AL, 38. Pope Francis makes this point very clear all through his catechesis on family. Cf. Papa Francesco, *Dalla Stessa Carne. Catechesi dell'udienza generale 18 febbraio 2015*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 19-02-2015.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. AL, 46. The Holy family is a beautiful example for the families of today. It underwent all the crisis of the present day family's situations.

<sup>9</sup>AL, 49-50. A better understanding and deep reflection regarding this can be found in Cf. Spadaro Antonio, *Amoris Laetitia. Struttura e significato dell'Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale di Papa Francesco*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 167, 3 (2016) 105-128.

In the chapter, “Towards a Better Education of Children,” Pope Francis reaffirms the fundamentals of Catholic thinking on the integral education of children which is pastorally sensitive yet challenging today around the globe. Family is the primary locus of education. While education and schooling are separate yet closely connected issues, the Supreme Pontiff roots ‘education’ very much in the Latin sense of ‘good habits.’ *Educando* in Spanish, like *educato* in Italian, refers to good manners and virtue, while ‘educated’ in English retains a sense of being successful in academics. This is not an insignificant difference. For him, the family is the school of good living, one that provides the training ground for the development of the good habits:

Good habits need to be developed. Even childhood habits can help to translate important interiorized values into sound and steady ways of acting. A person may be sociable and open to others, but if over a long period of time he has not been trained by his elders to say “Please”, “Thank you”, and “Sorry”, his good interior disposition will not easily come to the fore. The strengthening of the will and the repetition of specific actions are the building blocks of moral conduct; without the conscious, free and valued repetition of certain patterns of good behaviour, moral education does not take place. Mere desire, or an attraction to a certain value, is not enough to instil a virtue in the absence of those properly motivated acts.<sup>10</sup>

Parents are called ‘primary educators’ and other educational professional must work with and not against the family. It is a space where one acquires first habits. The ambience around the family should nourish and assist the parents to do their duties well. The Pope is speaking here about creating a culture of growth.

Pope is conscious about the progress made in the understanding of women in the society (AL, 54). But it is only in the certain parts of the world, not everywhere. Some countries are still striving to become more conscious about the rights of women and children. Furthermore some ideologies of our times are misleading the educative process of children and young, “thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family” (AL, 56). The families that are facing these extreme challenges still continue to be the sacred space of learning. The Church is called to take up the challenge as opportunity to

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<sup>10</sup>AL, 266. It is interesting to note that the word ‘education’ with all its synonyms we find 86 times in the document. If one adds all the different terms regarding education: formation, to form, to teach, to learn, to accompany, to grow, to mature etc., this term occurs 453 times.

accompany the families. Moreover, the Pope invites all the external forces required to strengthen the family with its unique nature of love and its capacity to teach the younger generation to love.

“The family is the first school of human values where we learn the wise use of freedom.”<sup>11</sup> Marriage and family are not only fundamental in generating children but above all for educating them and accompanying them in the different faces of their growth. The children grown up in a united family easily bring up a beautiful family in their turn. No family in the world is perfect. But a family that provides an ambience for being themselves, a place for learning human values, and an atmosphere in which true freedom is exercised is a place of matured persons. All through the years of infancy one learns to relate with another, beginning with mother, father, brother and sisters and other relatives. “It must be acknowledged that having a brother or a sister who loves you is a profound, precious and unique experience. Children do need to be patiently taught to treat one another as brothers and sisters. This training, at times quite demanding, is a true school of socialization” (AL, 195).

## **2. Role of Family in the Integral Education of Children**

The vocation of the family is transmission of faith through integral education of their children. In this process the important and central role is played by parents. Church, educational institutions and other entities must reach out to collaborate “with suitable pastoral initiatives, assisting the parents in the fulfilment of their educational mission” (AL, 85). In turn, the Pope reminds parents that their authority is not absolute. “In educating them [children], they build up the Church, and in so doing, they accept a God-given vocation” (AL, 85).

Parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of education – accessible and of good quality – which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions. Schools do not replace them but they are complementary in the formation of the child. Pope Francis states: “still, a rift has opened up between the family and society, between family and the school; the educational pact today has been broken and thus the educational alliance between society and the family is in crisis” (AL, 84). In this document various

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<sup>11</sup>AL, 274. A freedom that exists between parents and children to renew continually the interrelationship and the growth of a matured person would take place. For further reading, Cf. Musi Elisabetta, *Concepire la nascita. L'esperienza generativa in prospettiva pedagogica*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2012<sup>2</sup>.

numbers are dedicated to education of the children considering as an important part of the Exhortation.

It is no overstatement to say that the topic of education plays a central role in Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation. Not only had the entire seventh chapter dedicated to it, it is also a theme that permeates the whole document. In order to deepen this principle one quite evidently needs to reflect on the meaning and ways of education.

Pope Francis is very clear on the primary and central role of parents in the integral education of their children. Ultimately as educators and parents we need to be creative in finding new ways in the formation of children. The capacity to love is the clear sign of the educability in every person. 'Integral education' signifies the formation all aspects of a person: physical, sexual, moral, psychological, spiritual, mental and intellectual growth of the person. It is in the family that the persons spend their infancy with interpersonal relationships. It is followed by school and other institutions. Integral education takes place only in an ambience that promotes the growth of the individual. In substance, Pope Francis invites to take care of the family life that it may become a space fully educative (AL, 274-279), by creating an *educative culture*. This is created with the help of school and other educational institutions that are around the family.

Integral education also means the formation of the conscience through educating in and to through freedom. Accompanying children in their daily choices, helping them to frequently listen to the voice of their own conscious at every discernment process in their life is an important phase in the formation of conscience. Patience and continuous dialogue are constant companions in the formation of children. Above all, the positive presence of the parent in the family is a great help in forming the conscience of the children. In dialoguing the consequence of the different decisions become part of the formative process (AL, 268).

A series of basic elements are highlighted in the Exhortation. To educate to the capacity of attending (AL, 275), to accept the reality and to live above the limits of one's own house (AL, 276), to accept those moments of difficulties and sorrows, death of dear ones, sickness (AL, 277), to learn to consume critically and to use responsibly new technologies of communication, all form part of his deep interest (AL, 278).

### **3. Integral Education and Accompaniment of the Children in the Life of Families**

Pope Francis offers three questions for parents to consider: Do we seek to understand ‘where’ our children really are in their journey? Where is their soul, do we really know? And above all, do we want to know? To answer these questions, parents must find opportunities to speak of important things as husband and wife, as well as with their children. Families should cultivate a multitude of healthy ways to spend time together, and encourage in critical thinking regarding media.

While parents are free to choose Catholic Schools or parish religious education programs to support them in the moral development of their children, “a person’s affective and ethical development is ultimately grounded in a particular experience, namely, that his or her parents can be trusted” (AL, 263) as such, real moral formation takes place in the family setting.

#### **3.1. Help Children to Learn Good Habits**

In the family, children should be encouraged to practice good habits. Habits become interiorized into values which then motivate consistent ways of behaving. Thus good habits become virtue, “a conviction that has become a steadfast inner principle of operation.”<sup>12</sup> Likewise, bad habits lead to evil.

#### **3.2. Teach Children to Understand that Actions have Consequences**

Children need both praise and correction. Even the youngest children can be trained to ask for forgiveness and repair harm they have caused to others. Parents should encourage children to consider the consequences of their words and actions and when a child does something wrong, the behaviour should be corrected. Correction is an “incentive whenever children’s efforts are appreciated and acknowledged, and they sense their parents’ constant patient trust” (AL, 269). Discipline should be used as a stimulus to further progress not to discourage children.

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<sup>12</sup>AL, 267. St John Paul II uses the term virtues in *Familiaris Consortio*. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November 1981), [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html), (24 January 2017). Socialization and humanizing in the family is very important because it helps to build the society with people open to differences.



### **3.3. Propose Values with Realism**

Moral education should be presented in a manner appropriate to the age of the young person. Here Pope Francis remarks, “Ordinarily this is done by proposing small steps that can be understood, accepted and appreciated, while including a proportionate sacrifice” (AL, 271). Parents should instil in their children a moral conscience that reflects God’s law as found in scripture and teaching of the Church.

### **3.4. Family Life must Become Model and Practice of Self-Mastery**

Family is the first experience of society that children encounter. It is here that “we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one” (AL, 275). Every day the family has opportunities to practice care for others, rethink our habits of consumption and care for the environment as our home.

### **3.5. Do not Trivialize the Importance of Sex Education**

In a culture that trivializes sexuality, parents need to provide “positive and prudent” sex education to their child that is understood in the “broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving” (AL, 280). Modesty has immense value in helping children to avoid reducing affection and sexuality “to an obsession with genitality and unhealthy behaviors that distort our capacity for love” (AL, 212). Children should learn appreciation for the way their body is created and respect the complementary design of being created male and female, “for thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation” (AL, 285). The Pontiff makes clear the position of the Church regarding the persons who are away from the sacrament of matrimony and normal family life. He asks to respect and love each individual even though we don’t agree their ideas and views.

### **3.6. Passing on the Faith is a Priority**

In baptism the gift of faith is received from God. Parents are to help that gift of faith grow “in all families, the Good News needs to resound, in good times and in bad, as a source of light along the way” (AL, 290). Prayer is a lived expression of faith and nurtures our relationship with God; therefore, “it is essential that children actually see that, for their parents, prayer is something truly important” (AL, 288). Parents teach children the importance of their faith through witness of service to the poor and marginalized, protection of

creation and promoting common good through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Parents need to be concerned with those influences to which their children are exposed. Moral Education can lead children to grow in maturity and discipline and thus they are enabled to “act intelligently and prudently whenever they meet difficulties” (AL, 261).

Obsession, however, is not education. We cannot control every situation that a child may experience. Here it remains true that “time is greater than space.” In other words, it is more important to start processes than to dominate spaces. If parents are obsessed with always knowing where their children are and controlling all their movements, they will seek only to dominate spaces. But this is no way to educate, strengthen and prepare their children to face challenges. What is most important is the ability to lovingly help them to grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy. Only in this way will children come to possess the wherewithal needed to fend for themselves and to act intelligently and prudently whenever they meet with difficulties (AL, 261).

Good parenting involves accompaniment, not obsession, says Pope Francis. Highlighting the role that parents play in the moral development of their children, he states that they “should take up this essential role and carry it out consciously, enthusiastically, reasonably and appropriately” (AL, 259). Accompanying parents are to be concerned not only with the physical spaces their children inhabit, and media influence, but also with ‘existential spaces’<sup>13</sup> and seek to understand the convictions, goals, desires and dreams of their children.

#### **4. Education to Integrate Beauty of Faith and Richness of Life in the Families**

The fundamental characteristic of the family is that it becomes an animated place of virtues which brings forth the realization of its members, if the educative process of the family reflects the Creation of God the Father (AL, 29). The ambience in family becomes a precious and primary place of the transmission of faith. “The home must continue to be the place where we learn to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray and to serve our neighbour” (AL, 287). This affirmation remains a program for every family in passing the faith. Realizing that “Faith is God’s gift, received in

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<sup>13</sup>It is the space needed for relating based on the daily experiences. It is in this space that family is able to build up together. Each one respects others’ space and grows with freedom.

baptism, and not our own work” (AL, 287), Pope Francis exhorts the parents to assume their responsibility to collaborate with the Creator-God in order to facilitate the maturation in faith. He continues, yet parents are the means that God uses for it to grow and develop. Hence “it is beautiful when mothers teach their little children to blow a kiss to Jesus or to Our Lady. How much love there is in that! At that moment the child’s heart becomes a place of prayer” (AL, 287).

Parents bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. They have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them. Nobody is perfect as a parent. But seeing the life of parents daily striving to listen to God’s Word and the eagerness to implement it in their own personal life certainly will inspire the children.

The Holy Father invites parents to accompany their children to catechesis in the parish and in the school considering them as theological spaces through which God speaks to them. He also highlights the importance of the active presence of parents in the parish activities, giving particular importance to celebrating the feasts with due preparation and even through simple Bible story narration.

The family prayer becomes a precious moment of education to faith. Sharing of the joys and sorrows in the light of the Word of God is another valuable moment of transmission of faith. The Pope emphasises that the daily family prayer has more power to grow in faith than the hundreds of sermons and all the catechesis they receive all through their life (AL, 288). Likewise, prayer becomes a beautiful moment in which the family meets a fascinating person in Jesus. It becomes a true moment of integration of life and faith in the routine of family life. These animated prayer moments opens the domestic church to the universal Church and makes it missionary. In other words it becomes a summary of life and faith integrated and lived in the daily life (AL, 289-290).

Deepening the educative prospective of this document, family becomes the subject of pastoral actions. The witness of the entire family leads the younger generation to an explicit proclamation of the Word of God, helps them to have solidarity with the poor, allows them to be open to different cultures, inspires them to protect the nature and empowers them to be responsible for the common good

(AL, 290). The Church is called to accompany the families with a project of family pastoral that promotes the mission of *domestic churches*.

In case of families suffering due to divorce, prayer and life of faith may be considered unwanted things. 'If my father and mother do not pray why my life should be centred on faith? If there is no God in the life of my parents, why should I give place for God in my life?,' children can definitely ask. Only a good family pastoral in which each family is accompanied will be able to find solutions for the above situations. Modern youth and children who are far away from faith are the children of adults who are indifferent to prayer and faith. The communion of the family in fact, builds up a path to the sanctification of daily duties that leads to intimate union with God. The very first *teachers of faith* are parents.

Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centred individualism... It is they who testify to the beauty of life. Certainly, a society without mothers would be dehumanized, for mothers are always, even in the worst of times, witnesses to tenderness, dedication and moral strength. Mothers often communicate the deepest meaning of religious practice in the first prayers and acts of devotion that their children learn... Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith itself would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth... Dear mothers: thank you! Thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world (AL, 174).

Witnessing family becomes the first cathedral where the children learn the first lessons of faith. Pope Francis acknowledges that in the present day it is difficult to find those witnessing families. He recommends that the family must become a school of faith and prayer that leads to service to the neighbour (AL, 287).

Above all, it is necessary to go closer to the couples who are away from the church through different practical educative methods. The Pontiff suggests the family catechesis before the baptism of the child, the blessing of the house, preparation of the First Holy Communion, etc. Furthermore,

Another way of growing closer is by blessing homes or by bringing a pilgrim image of Our Lady to houses in the neighbourhoods; this provides an opportunity for a pastoral conversation about the family's situation. It could also be helpful to ask older married couples to help younger couples in the neighbourhood by visiting them and offering guidance in the early years of marriage. Given the pace of life today, most couples cannot attend frequent meetings; still, we cannot restrict our pastoral outreach to small and select groups. Nowadays, pastoral care for families has to be fundamentally missionary going out to where people

are. We can no longer be like a factory, churning out courses that for the most part are poorly attended (AL, 230).

In conclusion the witnessing life of the parents is an indispensable factor in the integration of the beauty of faith and the richness of life in the families. If the parents bring up their children in a deep experience of God through prayer and other life experiences they surely in turn will become evangelizers and missionaries of faith, hope and charity.

## **5. Conclusion**

Family is the most significant school of love. God chose this school to enter into the history of human kind. He grew in the school of Nazareth with Joseph and Mary. From the beginning the Church took utmost care for the families. Today Pope Francis too continues this great tradition giving more emphasis on it. Through education in love and heart that parents can give their children within the sphere of the family, their hearts grow in depth and breadth. Family is the foundation stone for building the character of children, and the school always remains complementary to teaching them love and virtue. The smallest unit of the fruition of God's love is the family. It therefore becomes human being's expectation of happiness, ideal and life. Pope Francis concludes the chapter on "Towards a Better Education of Children," saying that "the family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel" (AL, 290). A continued deeper theological reflection regarding the family will be a great help in preparing formative projects to accompany the young people to marriage, support the young couples, parents, thus realizing God's project in their life.

Likewise, family can respond to its natural call to become a visible sign of the tenderness of God in space and in time. Thus not only the children of the family enjoy true peace and joy but also at larger levels like the parish and universal Church. In conclusion, family will become what it is called to become: the primary place of education in and for the family.